



Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

Report Title: Clay & Sparks from Ghana Ignite Ceramics Learning in Chicago!
Name: Amy Moore

Other Team Members:

Program: Chicago Program

Trip Dates: 08/10/2012 - 08/27/2012
Location Visited: Accra, Ghana; Vume, Ghana; Kumasi, Ghana; Mpraeso, Ghana; Teshie/Nungua, Ghana; Kpando, Ghana; Winneba, Ghana

Post Fellowship Reporting Template: PFR Template 01

Project Summary: I traveled to Ghana to learn more about the venerated traditional pottery and less well-known contemporary ceramic art in order to share these techniques and art forms with my students. Not only did I learn all that I had hoped from the artists I met, but along the way I was inspired by the kind people and rich culture of Ghana. On my journey, I was able to work with dozens of artists, teach children, and visit traditional and modern artist communities all over the country. In nineteen days of travel, I toured the large bustling cities of Accra and Kumasi, visiting art galleries, studios, and Asante craft centers. Then I ventured on small dirt roads to towns where virtually every member of the community is a potter with a kiln next to their home. From Kpando, a creative hub of contemporary artwork, to small mountain villages where women turn pots on columns of stone, Ghana is a treasure trove of ceramic variety and skill. The methods of preparing clay, building vessels, decorating pieces, and firing ceramic works are as diverse and spectacular as the vibrant cities and varied landscapes. I traveled with working artists who enriched my experience with tales of their lives, explanations of local culture, and invitations into their homes and studios to participate in creating art and observing local traditions and techniques. In the end, my trip transcended learning about ceramics and art as I met the welcoming, optimistic and generous people of Ghana. As I share experiences with my students, I hope to make them feel as inspired as I do by the art and the people of Ghana.

Career Impact: * Allowed me to travel for the first time to the African continent to fulfill a longstanding desire to learn more about contemporary art and ceramics in the Gold Coast region.

* Inspired my teaching by renewing my curiosity about art and culture in other parts of the world.

* Renewed my excitement about the science and art of ceramics, having learned several new firing techniques for converting clay to glass.

* Exposed me to an unforgettable firsthand view of global economic inequality, a people's survival and community support amidst hardship.

* Helped me to create a lasting connection between my art students and the artists of Africa.

Classroom/Community Impact: * Colleagues, students, friends, and the community have expressed excitement and curiosity since my return, showing a sincere interest in Ghana.

* My students admired works from Ghana, then created inspired vessels for a field trip where we will conduct an overnight, open-air pit firing, based on Ghanaian techniques.

* Through slides, video, and authentic art objects, my students have been able to learn about Ghana.

* Collaborations, cross-curricular lessons, and events are being planned with colleagues and Chicagoans who have traveled to Ghana.

* My blog, photo library, and videos allow hundreds of students and teachers to learn from my trip.

Open Response: * Firing experiments and field trips including barrel firing, open-air firing, pit-firing, and wood firing based on Ghanaian kilns.

* With the music department, I will host a school-wide event to celebrate Ghanaian art, drumming, and dance featuring a visiting artist from Ghana.

* Collaboration with a music teacher who has traveled to Ghana. Students design, build, and learn to play traditional drums.

* Sculpture students will research slave pottery and traditional Ghanaian pottery and then construct face vessels inspired by this unit.

* At our African-American history festival, we will host an educational and fund-raising booth on Ghanaian art.

Quote: To grow as people and artists, I encourage students to seek out a wider world of experiences. Traveling to Ghana not only expanded my artistic skills and knowledge, but it forever changed me for the better.

Photos:



Resting on a mountain of pottery in Accra



Learning to build and decorate handmade cement pillars



A potter on the wheel in the famous ceramics town of Vume



Working with students to recycle clay for our projects



Aba House students making animal vessels & coil pots



Women ceramicists building giant pots by hand



Preparing the barrel kiln to fire the students' art work



A meeting of cross-continental potters